(d) if not, the details of this capacity in Australia and other Countries; and

(e) the assessment of expenditure on the coal washing on an average at national level in the year 2006-07 in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) The capacity of the coal washeries in the country in March' 07 has been 130.38 million totuies of which capacity of coking coal washeries was 27.38 million tonnes and non-coking coal washeries was 103 million tonnes. This forms about 30% of the total coal production in the country in 2006-07.

(c) and (d) Ministry of Coal is not aware of the washing capacity of coal exporting countries including Australia.

(e) The cost of washing at optimal capacity utilisation for non-coking coal would be Rs. 55.50 per ton and 27.19 per ton for coking coal for Coal India Washeries.

Change in Policy for Leasing of Lignite/Coal Blocks

1793. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODLY:
MS. MABEL REBELLO:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

' (a) whether Government proposes to change the present policy for leasing of Lignite/ Coal Blocks;

(b) whether Government proposes to deprive the rights of the State Goveminent contained in Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 to utilize their mineral resources as per their priorthes; and

(c) whether Government would agree to give 75 per cent Production Link Payment (PLP) to State Government if bidding process is applied?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir. The Govenunent has approved introduction of an amendment in the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 providing for introduction of competitive bidding system for allocation of coal and lignite blocks for captive use as the selection process.

(b) No, Sir. The proposed amendment in the Mines and Mineral (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 will not affect the rights of the State Governments being enjoyed under the statute. It will only change the system of allocation of coal blocks from the existing Screening Committee route to the competitive bidding route. Under the provisions of the Mines and Mineral (Development & Regulation) Act 1957, prior approval of the Central Government is necessary before the State Government can grant mining lease in respect of coal, lignite and other minerals included in the First Schedule of the said Act.

(c) As per the proposal considered by the Government, proceeds from competitive bidding of coal blocks will go to the coal bearing States concerned, once the system becomes operational.